

School of Advanced Warfighting



MISSION

The School of Advanced Warfighting provides a follow-on, graduate-level professional military education for selected field grade officers who have completed the Marine Corps or sister service command and staff college course. The course develops complex problem solving and decision making skills that can be used to improve the warfighting capabilities of an organization at the operational level of war.

DEGREE

School of Advanced Warfare graduates receive a Master of Operational Studies (MOS) degree.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The School's intent is to concentrate – in selected field grade officers – decision-making and complex problem solving experience at the operational level using historical and contemporary issues as a framework and building blocks. In so doing, these officers are preparing for appropriate high-impact, MEF-level and higher service, joint and multinational billets. Distinctive, positive, long-term influence in both command and staff billets is anticipated.

Curriculum goals are derived from the mission and intent of SAW and define the broad topic areas the curriculum is designed to address. The three courses of study in the curriculum are designed to enable SAW graduates to:

Foundations of the Operational Art

- Analyze the influence of key American national values on contemporary military institutions.
- Understand the relationship between political and military goals, and how national-level institutions prepare for and fight wars.
- Be able to analyze the basis of the mission, organization, doctrine, or policies of a military organization.
- Understand how the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the unified and specified commands, and other elements of the operational command structure

actively contribute to the preparation for, and execution of, joint and combined military campaigns.

- Understand the nature of “people’s war” as a form of recurring conflict and its implications for planners and commanders.
- Understand the nature of “small wars” and the strategic and operational implications of U. S. national strategy, regional conflicts, and local culture for planners and commanders preparing for such operations.

Operational Planning

- Understand campaign design and operational decision making.
- Apply enhanced military judgment to mission analysis and the development of operational-level concepts of operations during planning exercises.
- During battlefield campaign rides, apply the results of classroom study of a campaign to observation of the actual terrain in order to develop a clearer appreciation of operational issues.

Future Warfighting

- Understand how military organizations innovate, adapt, and change.
- Describe the likely implications for a military organization when one or more of that organization’s basic tenets changes.
- Determine those cultural and political characteristics of a region that should be considered when developing strategic and operational objectives for future deployment and employment of military forces.
- Study the nature of “revolutions in military affairs” in order to develop insights into the changing patterns of warfighting.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

SAW is a “problem-solving and decision-making” course, rather than a “planning” course, although planning is something studied and practiced extensively. The majority of the learning exercises of the School of Advanced Warfighting can be described as follows: The student is presented with a mass of information and given a problem to solve. The problem may be to answer a discussion question, devise a campaign plan, make decisions in a wargame, craft a briefing, submit a point paper, conduct a staff study, or carry out additional research for an essay on an assigned topic. The process becomes iterative: break the problem into its elements, solve these, relate the partial solutions to the greater problem, identify the question on which the whole problem turns, and finally, resolve that question or problem. Implied is the potential for an inherently greater tempo and experience in recognizing and then discarding distracting, non-critical information.

The study of military history develops the analytic mind of the officer, enhances the understanding of military issues, and facilitates the officer’s future decision-making efforts. Historical studies are not used didactically; rather, they are approached without bias so that the conclusions resulting from a thorough analysis of established facts can then be evaluated without prejudice. Unable to anticipate all the problems that the graduates might face in their further military service, SAW seeks to equip them to solve any problem that might arise.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is distinguished by three interrelated courses of study:

Foundations of the Operational Art
Operational Planning
Future Warfighting

The lessons in **Foundations of the Operational Art** are concerned with the campaigns, military innovations and contemporary institutions which, taken together, permit analysis of the evolution of the (primarily) American military. Beginning with America's Revolutionary War, the distinct set of national values that continue to exert influence on our nation's approach to defense and war is examined. Where appropriate, case studies of conflicts involving other sets of belligerents are also examined. These not only provide examples of similar problems in dissimilar environments but also highlight the sources of many of the imported aspects of the American approach to war. The study of military innovation allows the student to appreciate better the impact of changing conditions on the evolution of operational art. Finally, contemporary institutions, both political and military, are considered in terms of their evolution, their approach to problems in the recent past, and how the attendant experiences exert their influence now.

Operational Planning consists of a series of planning problems during which students execute selected steps of the staff planning process. Emphasis is placed on mission analysis and course of action development that are further refined into a sound and functional concept of operations. The Marine Corps Planning Process, as presented by members of the MAGTF Staff Training Program, provides the framework for plan development in each exercise. The SAW students act as Operational Planning Team and facilitators in teaching the Marine Corps Planning Process to the Command and Staff College students. In the course of the school year, three *Campaign Rides* are made to areas that lend themselves to the study of warfare at the campaign level. During the fall, several battlefields of the 1864 Virginia Campaign are studied; in the winter, several European battlefields and other points of interest are visited; and in the spring, a trip to the Asia-Pacific region is conducted. Thorough study of the operational issues is made of each campaign beforehand in order to maximize the value of the field studies. These Campaign Rides give the students an opportunity to carry out a most important aspect of campaign studies: walking the ground after in-depth study.

Future Warfighting deals with the importance of recognizing the possibility (if not probability) of existing paradigms losing their relevance under the pressure of changing conditions. While several lessons under **Foundations of the Operational Art** offer illustrative evidence of "future war past" and how change has been confronted, this section also provides the students with readings on, and exposure to, existing agencies and institutions and their efforts to anticipate and prepare for change and the future. In conjunction with these subcourses, each student is required to develop a formal paper dealing with the consequences of significant change negating underlying assumptions concerning doctrine, operational practice, equipment, or organization.

MASTER OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES

All SAW students who successfully complete the SAW curriculum earn the Master of Operational Study degree. Since initiation of the program in AY 2003, 42 students have earned the degree.

Requirements for acceptance into the Master of Operational Studies degree program are identical to the School's admissions requirements.

STUDENT EVALUATION

The seminar is central to the conduct of the academic year and ensures success in meeting lesson objectives. In preparation for a seminar, the seminar leader, whether a faculty member or visiting scholar, organizes a set of readings that enable the student to examine the issue under study. Alternative viewpoints or interpretations, conflicting data, etc., are also presented.

In conjunction with the readings, discussion questions are posed to further guide the students in their preparation for the following seminar. These questions are designed to provoke debate and, ultimately, foster a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues.

Seminar participation, two oral examinations, written requirements, and frequent oral presentations constitute the graded output of the School. The goal of the SAW Writing Program is to develop the student's written communication skills such that they write with increased clarity, crispness, conciseness and focus in a manner that facilitates each student's individual style of expression. Writing assignments are designed to develop sound and effective research skills; produce well-reasoned, coherent and supportable conclusions; advance an argument and convincingly defend a position; and develop the ability to condense information into a compact, effective written product. Oral presentations take the form of formal briefings and less formal contributions in seminar. The intent is to provide frequent experience in offering well-organized comments that reflect intellectual synthesis and contribute synergistically to seminar-oriented discussions. The faculty of the School of Advanced Warfighting evaluates written and oral requirements using guidelines established by the Director, Command and Staff College. The intent of the evaluative mechanism is to signal to the student measurable strengths and weaknesses in order to allow for improvement through the school year.

AWARDS

The Clifton B. Cates Award. Presented in honor of General Clifton B. Cates, U.S. Marine Corps, the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps, by the Navy League to the two SAW students whose sustained demonstration of problem-solving capabilities far exceed their military experience and are considered most outstanding as exhibited by written assignments, participation in practical exercises, and in the exchange of ideas. Nominations come from fellow students and are approved by the Head of SAW. The first place winner receives an engraved watch; second place, a \$100 savings bond.

SYUDENT BODY

Quotas to each annual School of Advanced Warfighting class are not assigned. The annual composition of the student population is similar to the following:

U. S. Marine Corps Officers	16
U. S. Navy Officers	2
U. S. Army Officers	2
U. S. Air Force Officers	2
International Military Officers	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>24*</u>

* Civilian Federal Government employees are not invited to attend the School of Advanced Warfighting.

REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL: Eligibility prerequisites for the School of Advanced Warfighting are those regulations and requirements established by the military services to select active duty, military students to attend an advanced intermediate-level professional military education (PME) institution.

Specific admissions prerequisites for the School of Advanced Warfighting are as follows:

- Active duty U.S. or international military officers.
- Grade: A promoted O-4 (Major/LCDR) and must not have previously failed selection for O-5. A Marine officer must not be a promoted lieutenant colonel or lieutenant colonel-select at the time of application to SAW. If in zone for selection at the time of application to SAW, failure to select for lieutenant colonel terminates SAW eligibility.
- Approval from service personnel assignment section.
- Marine officers selected for assignment as recruiting station commanding officers during the upcoming academic year are not eligible to attend SAW during that time period.
- Security Clearance: For U.S. officers, a SECRET clearance that will not expire during the academic year. USMC officers must have or be eligible to obtain a Top Secret/Special Compartmentalized Information (TS/SCI) clearance for post-graduation assignments.
- Professional experience that will allow the student to interact in discussions involving the operational level of war and ensure suitability for future assignments involving significant responsibilities, including selection for and command at the O-5 level.
- Marine Corps officers must meet O-4 PME requirements as identified in the USMC PME Order (MCO P1553.4A). Distance Education Program (DEP) applicants must be graduates of the 8800-series seminar based CSC DEP course. Non-seminar CSC DEP students may apply for a waiver, which will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Currently enrolled DEP students may apply provided their commanding officer or College of Continuing Education (CCE) regional coordinator certifies that the applicant can reasonably complete the 8800 series program no later than two months prior to commencement of the upcoming academic year.
- SAW battlefield staff rides require international travel and applicants are encouraged to possess a current passport prior to commencement of the academic year.

ACADEMIC: The SAW curriculum is rigorous and dynamic, and requires students to rapidly comprehend and analyze large amounts of reading and contribute effectively during graduate-level, competitive seminars led by a variety of professors and military faculty. Specific academic requirements are as follows:

- A regionally accredited undergraduate degree (United States bachelor's degree or its equivalent).
- Graduate-level capabilities to read, comprehend, speak, and write in English*

Upon successful completion of the SAW curriculum, graduates will be awarded a Master of Operational Studies degree.

* A majority of a course grade is determined by a student's contribution during seminars, which includes small group discussion, debate, and oral briefings.

PHYSICAL AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS: The SAW curriculum requires students to be able to travel extensively and participate actively in various educational forums to include battlefield site studies involving moderate to rigorous hikes over rough terrain and in remote sites overseas. Since all students are active duty military, all must meet the mandatory physical fitness and height/weight requirements for their respective military service.

ADMISSIONS POLICY:

Admission to the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW) is based on allocations granted by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Student applications to the School of Advanced Warfighting are processed annually in the following manner: the SAW selection process begins in the summer with the release of a MARADMIN (Marine Corps-wide administrative correspondence) to inform potential DEP and other service ILS applicants about the course, requirements, and deadlines. The MARADMIN provides a link to the SAW website from which applications can be downloaded.

The application includes three pages: personal information, faculty or reporting senior endorsements, and a personal essay requirement. The application forms change each year in order to update the essay question. Military faculty advisors endorse resident ILS students' applications, and reporting seniors and either CCE regional coordinators or adjunct faculty advisors endorse non-resident ILS student applications.

In August and September, the Head of SAW briefs all students attending Marine Corps Command and Staff College about the SAW program and application requirements, and travels to other service ILS at Newport, Rhode Island (U.S. Naval War College), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama (U.S. Air Force Command and Staff College), and Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College) to brief interested students there as well.

Deadline: Those applying must submit completed and endorsed applications to the Head of School of Advanced Warfighting by the deadline set each year in early October.

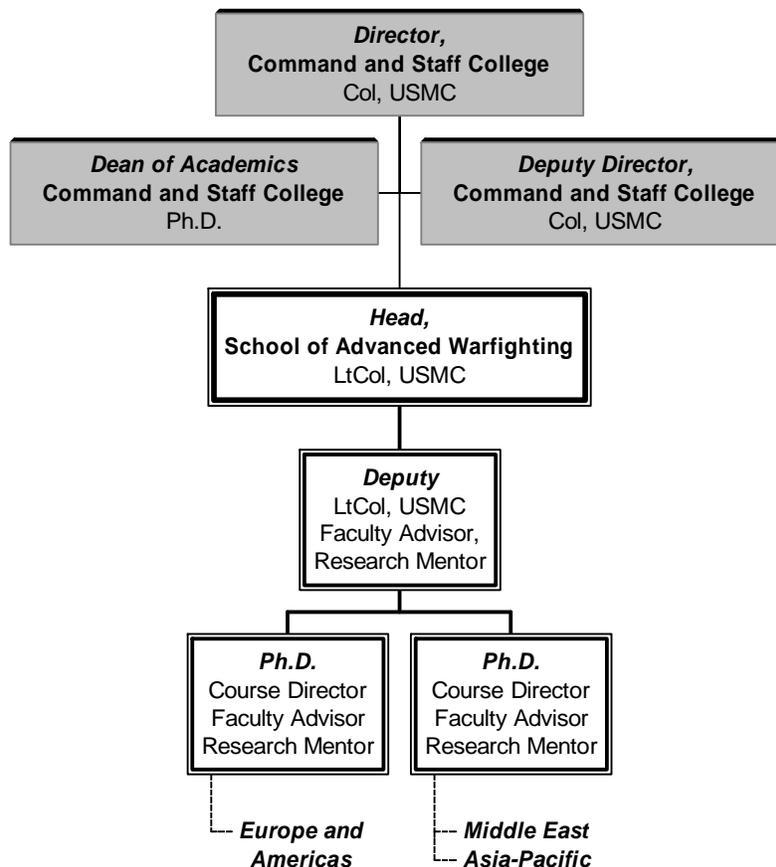
Selection: Selection of USMC, sister service and international students are identical. Each resident and nonresident Command and Staff College applicant is interviewed in mid-October by a board, appointed by the Director, Command and Staff College and consisting of the Command and Staff College Deputy Director, Dean of Academics, the Head of SAW, the Deputy of SAW, and at least one SAW Professor. Most are conducted in person, but video

teleconference or telephone interviews are conducted for distant applicants when required. Other service resident ILS applicants are interviewed at their schools following the information brief in August-September.

The recommended selections are forwarded to the Director of Command and Staff College and the President of Marine Corps University. Endorsements are forwarded to each service's headquarters for a final check of the applicants' records and for final authority to enroll. Nominated international officers are invited through the International Military Training office, which in turn coordinates with the officers' military assignment staff. Once approved, all applicants are notified of the selection results.

ORGANIZATION

The Head, School of Advanced Warfighting is a Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel who is responsible to the Director, CSC, and coordinates through the CSC Dean of Academics for curriculum matters and the CSC Deputy Director for personnel issues. The Head of SAW is typically a post-battalion/squadron command, active duty USMC Lieutenant Colonel. The of Head is assisted in his responsibilities by an active duty military faculty member, the school's two civilian faculty members, and the Command and Staff College Department of Academics and Support staff.



WEBSITE: www.mcu.usmc.mil/csc/sawmsn.htm